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Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in Indochina*

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**Recent Communist Logistical
and Manpower Developments
in Indochina**

There were no major changes in recent patterns of North Vietnamese logistical and manpower activity in Indochina during the past week. It is too soon, however, for the results of the recent talks in Paris to be reflected in our intelligence on Communist supply and infiltration activity.

- A special transportation campaign to distribute supplies, mostly food and petroleum, within northern South Vietnam was launched on 11 June. Heavy vehicle activity in support of the campaign has continued to the present.
- Elsewhere the level of logistical activity in Laos and Cambodia continued to fall as the rainy season tightened its grip on those regions.
- Personnel infiltration remained at a low level. One regular group (artillery associated) was detected on 18 June in North Vietnam destined for southern Laos. Seven small special-purpose groups were detected, which probably started their trek south before 14 June.
- This spring, Hanoi has drafted an unusually low number of inductees. If this change in induction priority holds through the summer, it will result in the lowest annual induction rate since 1969.
- Hanoi may be deploying a small number of tanks from the Laotian Panhandle to North Vietnam.

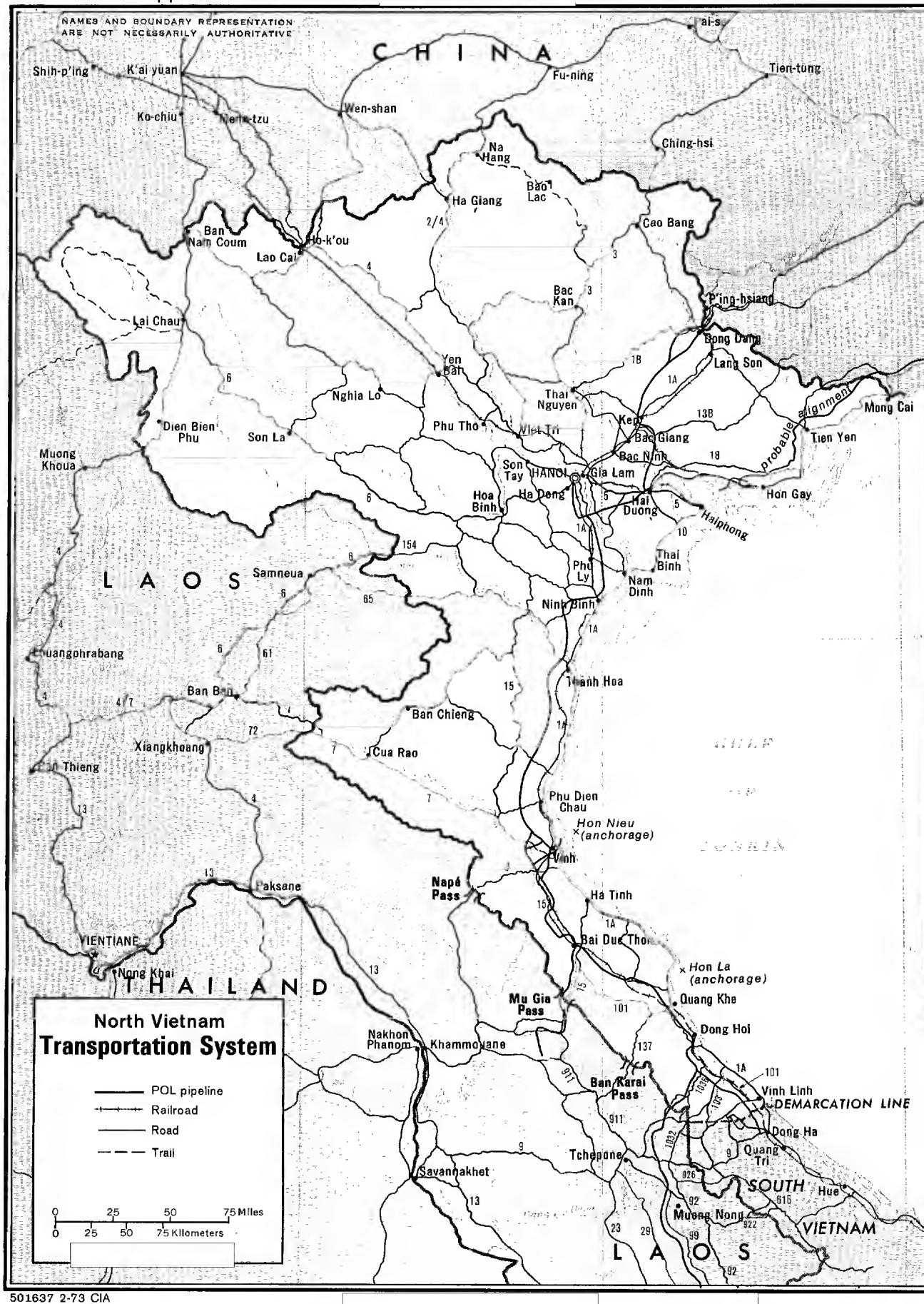
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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

1. Communist logistical activity in Indochina last week continued the pattern of recent weeks. There are as yet no indications of the system reacting to the recent Paris talks -- although it is as yet too early for such responses to be registered in intelligence sources. Heavy supply deliveries are being sustained in northern South Vietnam, supported by the continuing, although moderate, levels of supply movement through the major transshipment points in the southern North Vietnamese Panhandle. Activity in Laos and Cambodia is increasingly impeded by rains, although some supplies continue to move on major river and road routes.
2. In southern North Vietnam, some supplies continue to be detected moving through Binh Tram 18, near Vinh. The supplies include ordnance and, for the first time in several weeks, small quantities of ammunition specifically earmarked for northern Laos. Reporting from Binh Tram 26, near Dong Hoi, indicated that a daily average of about 40 southbound vehicles traversed a checkpoint in the binh tram's area of operations during the week.
3. Throughout southern Laos, detected Communist supply deliveries are at a low level, reflecting both the impact of the rains and the fact that the Communists have begun to shift the resupply effort from Laos to the recently completed north-south supply corridor within South Vietnam itself.
4. In Cambodia, some food and munitions shortages -- possibly caused in part by the heavy air strikes -- have been reported among Khmer Communist (KC) units fighting north and south of Phnom Penh. They do not, however, appear to be chronic. The food shortages appear to be causing the most concern, probably because the KC have access to NVA ordnance stockpiles, which we estimate to be large, while their food requirements are largely met by black market suppliers and distant sources. To alleviate such difficulties, the KC are trying to improve their transport facilities and to increase their own agricultural production, while increasing efforts to buy foodstuffs in local markets to hold in reserve.
5. Currently the heaviest Communist logistic activity in Indochina is in northern South Vietnam. Binh Tram 12, whose area of responsibility radiates from Quang Tri City, appears to be the focal point of a two-week "transportation campaign" that was kicked off there on 11 June. Major logistical elements as far south as the A Shau Valley are also heavily



involved in the campaign, which, according to a 17 June intercept, includes Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces and will extend into coastal Military Region (MR) 5. Although no specific details on the purpose of the campaign have been revealed, intercepts indicate that foodstuffs and petroleum are being emphasized. This activity, while it is carried out by military logisticians, may well have a dual purpose -- to resupply the combat forces, but also to provide logistical support for the growing civilian population in Communist-controlled areas.

6. Thus far the transportation campaign is going well. By 15 June, messages reflected Communist successes brought about by working extra hours, including nights. COMINT during the week reflected heavy vehicle activity from the DMZ to the A Shau Valley. In its latest report, an NVA element operating near the Cua Viet River in northeast Quang Tri Province indicated that it had handled more than 5,800 vehicles -- about 60% "cargo" vehicles -- during the 7-13 June period. Numerous other intercepts revealed supply deliveries along the corridor through western MR 1. For example, on 12 June an NVA element reported that 62 vehicles entered and 86 were sent out from a checkpoint along the corridor. And on 15 June, an element revealed that it was assembling more than 100 vehicles "for the battlefield." Some difficulties caused by wet roads are being encountered, but in general transport activity is not seriously impeded.

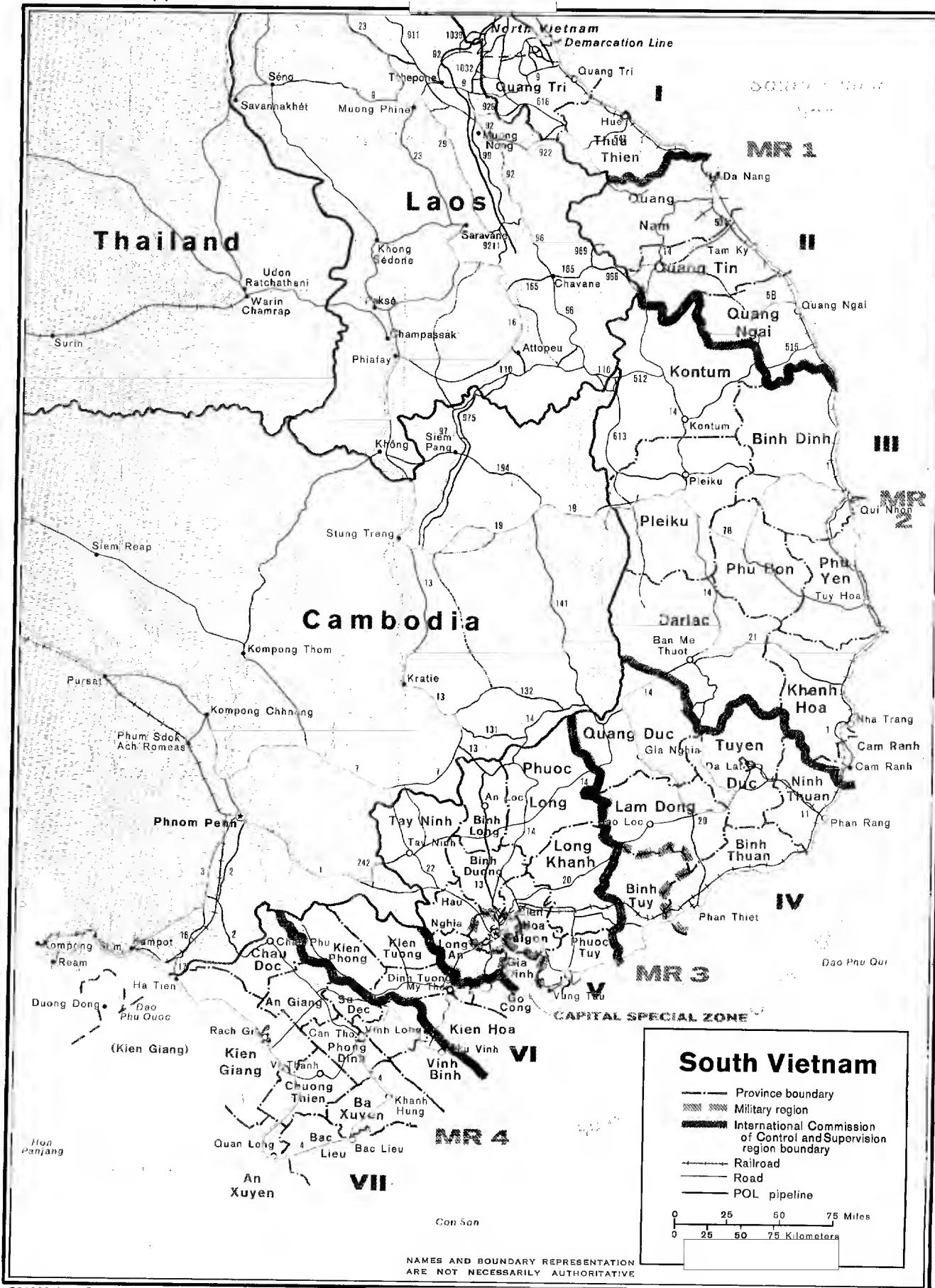
7. Photography also confirms the continued high rate of logistical activity in northern South Vietnam. At Khe Sanh, for example, numerous buildings are under construction, and new road gradings and stockpiles of supplies and building materials continue to be observed, as are large numbers of trucks near the airfield. Similarly, in the A Shau Valley, recent photography showed new base camps and storage facilities containing more than 100 newly built structures and several new antiaircraft (AAA) sites.

25X1 8. In southern MR 1, [] since the start of April nearly 15 truckloads daily of supplies -- including food; medicine; and AAA, mortar, and rocket ammunition -- have been shipped to the NVA 711th Division in north-central Quang Tin Province. []

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25X1 [] Communist roadbuilding and local supply purchasing activities also continue in the province.

25X1 9. In southern South Vietnam, [] as of late May, COSVN's 83rd Rear Services Group was using about 100 Soviet trucks and 300 Honda motorbikes daily in moving supplies from the northern Tay Ninh Province/Cambodia border area into southern Binh Long Province. The roads along this route reportedly are surfaced with laterite, which will enable the Communists to continue using them during the rainy season. At the same time, there are indications that the Communists are taking steps to



reduce their dependence on the external resupply in southern South Vietnam. For example, military personnel in the highlands of MR 2 were recently instructed to increase local food production. In early May, NVA commanders in Kontum Province were told that "the important mission confronting units of the B-3 Front is food production."

Recent Manpower Developments

Personnel Infiltration

10. During the past week, one regular infiltration group - 5059 -- was detected in the pipeline in North Vietnam destined for southern Laos. The group was initially observed in northern Quang Binh Province on 18 June. It is believed to be artillery associated and part of a bloc of such groups that deployed to the Laotian Panhandle in late 1972. The group apparently was delayed within North Vietnam for some unknown reason. The numerical sequence of this new group suggests that two additional groups deployed undetected to southern Laos earlier this dry season, probably prior to the 22 February cease-fire agreement in Laos.

11. Seven small special-purpose groups - six destined for South Vietnam and one for southern Laos - were detected for the first time during the past week. One group was observed starting south in North Vietnam, while the other six were noted farther down in the pipeline in the southern Laos/South Vietnam border area. The location and date of detection of the groups indicate that they started their journey south prior to 14 June. Table 1 shows our estimate of infiltration starts since 1 September, by season and destination (excluding northern Laos), and Table 2 lists total starts by week since 1 January 1973.

Table 1

Infiltration Starts, by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 18 Jun 72	1 Sep 72 - 18 Jun 73
Total	132,000	94,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	31,000	33,000
MR 5	17,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	16,000	12,000

Table 2

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650
26-1 Apr	300	300
2-8	275	275
9-15	500	500
16-22	150	150
23-29	1,000	0
30-6 May	1,775	275
7-13	1,100	100
14-21	2,350	50
22-27	1,825	25
28-3 Jun	225	150
4-10	600	100
11-18	400	150

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001-7009 and 5057-5058. Assuming that these groups departed after 1 January, some 5,500 combat troops would be added to the weekly starts.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

Manpower Developments in North Vietnam

12. Hanoi's conscription policy may have undergone an important change recently. Both communications intercepts and North Vietnamese press reports suggest a significantly reduced spring induction effort. In recent years, the spring induction phase has played an important part in Hanoi's efforts to meet military manpower requirements.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA¹ RVNAF²

167,000 287,000

MR 1

VC/NVA

RVNAF

80,000 85,000

325th
324B
320B
312th³
304th
711th
2ndVNMC
Airborne
1st
2nd
3rd
Regional
Forces

MR 1

MR 2

VC/NVA

RVNAF

29,000

57,000

320th

10th

3rd

23rd
22nd
Regional
Forces

Binh Dinh

Pleiku

Phu Bon

Phu Yen

III

MR 3

VC/NVA

RVNAF

29,000

67,000

429th Sapper
Command
9th
7th25th
18th
5th
Regional
Forces

MR 2

Darlac

Khanh
Hoa

Cam Ranh

Quang Duc

Tuyen

Duc

Ninh
ThuanBinh
Thuan

Phuoc

Long

Lam Dong

Long
KhanhBien
HoBinh
Tuy

Hau

Phuoc
Tuy

Tay Ninh

Binh
LongBinh
DuongBinh
Thuan

Nghia

Long
AnBinh
TuyDinh
TuongGia
DinhBinh
TuyKien
TuongGo
CongBinh
TuyChau
DocPhuoc
TuyBinh
TuyKien
Phong

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Binh
TuyAn
GiangLong
AnBinh
TuySa
DecLong
AnBinh
TuyPhu
QuocLong
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13. There has been virtually no press coverage of recent induction activity, in sharp contrast to former North Vietnamese practice, which since 1967 has played up the conscription and recruitment effort. In addition, for the past three months, there has been a very low volume of personal messages related to induction, further strengthening press indications of a cutback. While future conscription levels for the remainder of 1973 cannot be predicted, if the reduced tempo of induction is maintained, total inductions for 1973 as a whole certainly will be lower than last year and could be the lowest since 1969.

Armor Deployments in Laos

14. The Communists currently are deploying a small number of tanks northward in the Laotian Panhandle, possibly to North Vietnam. On 12 June an intercepted message of a major NVA rear services authority revealed that 12 tanks -- 8 T-54s and 4 unidentified tanks -- were moving northward along Route 912 toward the Ban Karai Pass on the North Vietnamese border. If the tanks are in fact returning to North Vietnam, they would be the first detected doing so since the original Vietnam settlement agreement on 27 January. Since that agreement the Communists are estimated to have deployed more than 350 tanks in armor groups into South Vietnam. The current deployment does not necessarily presage a major shift in tank resources. They could well be stragglers -- bogged down by the weather and now forced to turn around.

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